

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13
ACDA-07 OMB-01 TRSE-00 DHA-02 CU-02 FEAE-00 OES-06
/089 W

-----141845Z 026795 /43

R 141756Z MAR 77
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6477
INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN
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AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, PFOR, GW, GE, SHUM
SUBJECT: CDU DEBATES ITS POLICY ON GERMANY

REF: BONN 4297

BEGIN SUMMARY: UNDER THE RUBRIC "OUR RESPONSIBILITY
FOR GERMANY," THE CDU NATIONAL CONVENTION DEVOTED ITS
SECOND DAY (MARCH 8) TO QUESTIONS OF GERMANY AND BERLIN.
THE DELEGATES HEARD THREE PROFESSORIAL REPORTS AND
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SEVERAL LENGTHY DISCUSSIONS. AT THE END, THEY PASSED
A SET OF GUIDELINES WHICH DIFFER ONLY IN TWO RESPECTS
FROM TRADITIONAL CDU RHETORIC: A SLIGHT DOWNPLAYING OF
LEGALISTIC INSISTENCE ON BASIC POSITIONS, AND A NUANCE
IN FAVOR OF HUMAN RIGHTS AS THE CENTERPIECE OF GERMAN
POLICY. THE MARCH 8 EXPERIMENT PROVOKED SOME DEBATE
BUT GENERALLY SERVED KOHL'S STRATEGY OF AVOIDING

CONTENTIOUS DISCUSSION OF OTHER ISSUES, AND OF ACHIEVING A RESULT WHICH THE CDU CAN USE IN FUTURE APPROACHES TO THE FDP. THE CDU ALSO PLEDGED ITSELF TO SPELL OUT SPECIFIC POLICIES IN FOUR AREAS: GERMANY/BERLIN, THE ECONOMY, ENERGY, AND THE NORTH-SOUTH EQUATION. THE CDU'S ABILITY TO GIVE CONTENT TO THESE DUSSELDORF RESOLUTIONS WILL TEST BOTH KOHL'S LEADERSHIP AND THE PARTY'S PROSPECTS FOR AN EVENTUAL RETURN TO POWER. END SUMMARY.

1. THE CDU SPENT THE SECOND DAY OF ITS 25TH NATIONAL CONVENTION IN A DISCUSSION OF POLICY ON GERMANY. FOR THIS PURPOSE, IT INVITED SEVERAL ACADEMICS AND OTHER EXPERTS WHO LECTURED AND TOOK PART IN A PODIUM DISCUSSION LED BY RICHARD VON WEIZSAECKER (FROM THE PARTY'S LIBERAL WING).

A. THE THREE ACADEMIC LECTURES WERE MIXED. PROF. CURT GASTEYGER, FROM THE GENEVA INSTITUTE UNIVERSITAIRE ETUDES INTERNATIONALES, SPOKE ON THE "GDR IN THE SOCIALIST CAMP." HE PROVOKED NUMEROUS REBUTTALS WITH HIS ARGUMENT THAT THE GDR IS A REALITY WHICH OFFERS NO POLITICAL ALTERNATIVE, AND THAT IT IS IN THE INTEREST OF OTHER EUROPEAN STATES AND OF THE GDR POPULATION THAT THE REGIME CONSOLIDATE ITSELF. DR. THEODOR SCHOBER, PRESIDENT OF THE EVANGELICAL DIAKONISCHES WERK, SPOKE ON THE COMMON BOND OF FAITH WHICH LINKS CHRISTIANS IN BOTH GERMANIES; HIS REMARKS ELICITED LITTLE RESPONSE. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PROFESSOR KARL ERDMANN, FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF KIEL, LECTURED ON "THE NATION IN A DIVIDED GERMANY." ERDMANN ARGUED THAT THE FRG HAD MADE A MISTAKE IN SIGNING THE BASIC TREATY WITHOUT OBTAINING GUARANTEES FOR GERMANS IN THE GDR, AND THAT HENCE THE FRG HAS NO CAUSE TO DISCUSS QUESTIONS OF GERMAN NATIONALITY WITH THE GDR. ERDMANN ACCUSED THE BONN GOVERNMENT OF WOBBLING IN ITS BERLIN POLICY, AND CALLED FOR PUTTING THE NATIONAL FOUNDATION IN BERLIN AS AN ASSERTION OF CULTURAL UNITY OF THE NATION. ERDMANN EMPHASIZED THAT BONN MUST USE THE CSCE FOLLOW-UP MEETING IN BELGRADE TO PUSH HARD ON THE QUESTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN THE GDR.

B. PREDICTABLY, A NUMBER OF CDU SPEAKERS REACTED SHARPLY TO GASTEYGER'S VIEWS. CARSTENS, LORENZ, ABELEIN, AND OTHERS ASSERTED THAT THE FRG MUST NOT GIVE UP ITS BASIC LEGAL RIGHTS, THAT THE SPD/FDP'S POLICIES HAVE BROUGHT NO REAL IMPROVEMENT TO CONDITIONS OF LIFE IN THE GDR, AND THAT REUNIFICATION

MUST REMAIN THE CDU'S GOAL. ABELEIN CALLED FOR A QUID-PRO-QUO BETWEEN ECONOMIC CONCESSIONS TO THE GDR AND IMPLEMENTATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THAT COUNTRY.

C. THE PODIUM DISCUSSION UNDER WEIZSAECKER COVERED SIMILAR GROUND. IN ADDITION, PROFESSOR HENRI MENUDIER, FROM THE SORBONNE, MADE A TELLING

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-----141846Z 026871 /43

R 141756Z MAR 77
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POINT THAT MANY EUROPEANS ARE NOT ENTHUSIASTIC OVER THE PROSPECT OF GERMAN REUNIFICATION. IN SUMMARIZING, WEIZSAECKER THANKED MENUDIER FOR HIS CANDOR IN EXPRESSING VIEWS WHICH HAD CLEARLY NOT FOUND GENERAL

FAVOR IN THE HALL.

3. AT THE END OF THE DAY, THE CONVENTION ADOPTED
A RESOLUTION, PROPOSED BY THE PARTY DIRECTORATE, ON
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PRINCIPLES OF GERMAN POLICY. KOHL SPOKE
ON BEHALF OF THIS RESOLUTION, EMPHASIZING THAT HUMAN
RIGHTS IS AN ISSUE OF WORLD CONCERN WHICH APPLIES AS
WELL TO THE GDR. LIKE OTHER CDU SPEAKERS, KOHL NOTED
WITH APPROVAL PRESIDENT CARTER'S STRONG EFFORT ON
BEHALF OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND HE CRITICIZED THE SCHMIDT
GOVERNMENT FOR DOING TOO LITTLE IN THIS REGARD. KOHL
SAID THAT THE CDU MUST BLUNT THE COMMUNIST CHALLENGE
WITH A HUMAN-RIGHTS CAMPAIGN, AND THAT THE PARTY
WILL FOCUS ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN SEEKING TO IMPLEMENT ITS
GERMAN POLICY.

4. THE RESOLUTION CONTAINS A REHASH OF OLD CDU
POSITIONS; SOME APPEAR AT CROSS PURPOSES WITH OTHERS --
E.G., REUNIFICATION VS. THE QUEST FOR HUMAN IMPROVE-
MENTS IN THE GDR. ON THE WHOLE, THE GUIDELINES ARE
SOMEWHAT LESS LEGALISTIC THAN EARLIER CDU STATEMENTS,
AND THEY GIVE MORE EMPHASIS TO HUMAN RIGHTS. THE
GUIDELINES PLEDGE THE CDU ALONG THESE LINES:

A. RESTORATION OF GERMAN UNITY BY FREE SELF-
DETERMINATION IS THE GOAL OF THE CDU'S GERMAN POLICY.
THE DIVISIONS OF EUROPE AND "OUR FATHERLAND" CAN BE
OVERCOME IN PEACE. WHILE RECOGNIZING THE REALITIES OF
THE PRESENT SITUATION, THE CDU SEES ANOTHER FACTOR:
THE WILL OF THE GERMAN NATION FOR UNITY. "THE GERMAN
QUESTION IS OPEN."

B. THIS POLICY RESTS ON THE FRG CONSTITUTION,
THE 1954 TREATY, THE 1972 JOINT BUNDESTAG DECISION ON
THE EASTERN TREATIES, THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S LETTER
ON GERMAN UNITY, AND THE 1973 AND 1975 DECISIONS BY THE
FEDERAL CONSTITUTIONAL COURT. THE PARTY MAINTAINS ITS
VIEW THAT GERMAN NATIONALITY IS INDIVISIBLE.

C. THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC HAS A POLITICAL AND
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MORAL DUTY TO REPRESENT THE INTERESTS OF THOSE GERMANS
OUTSIDE ITS BORDERS -- "WHETHER IN EAST PRUSSIA OR

SILESIA, BRANDENBURG OR THURINGIA," -- WHO ARE NOT ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE IN BUILDING A FREE GERMANY. THE CDU WILL MAINTAIN THE HISTORICAL, SPIRITUAL, AND CULTURAL BONDS OF THE NATION. A MAJOR TASK IS A GREATER HISTORICAL AWARENESS AND A CORRESPONDING SHIFT IN SCHOOL INSTRUCTION.

D. ALL GERMANS, PARTICULARLY YOUTH, SHOULD SEEK MEETINGS WITH GERMANS OUTSIDE THE FRG TO MAINTAIN AWARENESS OF THE UNITY OF THE NATION.

E. THE CDU WILL AGGRESSIVELY MEET THE GDR POLITICAL CHALLENGE. IT WILL ALSO SEEK TO IMPROVE THE LIFE OF GERMANS IN THE GDR THROUGH A READINESS FOR TALKS, NEGOTIATIONS, AND AGREEMENTS. THE CDU WILL INSIST THAT THE GDR HONOR ALL ITS COMMITMENTS. IT WILL FOSTER HUMAN CONTACTS IN ALL AREAS, AS WELL AS ECONOMIC RELATIONS. IT WILL FOLLOW A STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH AS NEEDED TO REMOVE GDR OBSTACLES TO SUCH CONTACTS.

F. HUMAN RIGHTS IS IN THE CENTER OF THE CDU'S GERMAN POLICY. THE CDU WILL INSIST THAT THE GDR IMPLEMENT BASIC FREEDOMS. IT WILL NOT REMAIN SILENT ON BORDER INCIDENTS.

G. BERLIN REMAINS THE TOUCHSTONE FOR DETENTE. WEST BERLIN IS PART OF A FREE EUROPE AND STANDS FOR UNITY AND FREEDOM IN ALL GERMANY. THE CDU WILL DO ALL IT CAN TO STRENGTHEN BERLIN'S EXISTENCE AND ECONOMY. THE FRG MUST STAND BY THE SIDE OF THE PROTECTIVE POWERS. WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE BERLIN AGREEMENT, THE CDU WILL PRESERVE AND PROMOTE TIES BETWEEN THE FRG AND BERLIN.

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5. IN ITS FINAL DAY, THE CONVENTION PASSED AN AMBITIOUS WORK PROGRAM WHICH ENCOMPASSES THE MARCH 8 RESOLUTION ON GERMANY. THIS PROGRAM DIRECTS THE PARTY

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ACDA-07 OMB-01 TRSE-00 DHA-02 CU-02 FEAE-00 OES-06
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-----141844Z 026984 /42

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LEADERSHIP TO FLESH OUT SPECIFIC POLICIES IN FOUR AREAS
WHICH ARE TO BE DISCUSSED AT ALL PARTY LEVELS AND PRE-
SENTED FOR DECISION BY THE NEXT CDU CONVENTION. THE
AREAS ARE: (A) ECONOMIC GROWTH IN THE SOCIAL MARKET
ECONOMY, AND SOCIAL SECURITY IN AREAS SUCH AS WORK AND
TRAINING, OLD AGE, HEALTH CARE, AND FAMILIES; (B) LONG-
RANGE SECURITY OF ENERGY SUPPLIES AND EFFECTIVE
PROTECTION FOR THE ENVIRONMENT; (C) REDUCTION OF NORTH-
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SOUTH TENSIONS AND WAYS TO MEET THE CHALLENGES WHICH
THESE TENSIONS POSE FOR THE FREE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC
ORDER; AND (D) STOCKTAKING OF THE RESULTS OF THE
"SO-CALLED" DETENTE POLICY AND ITS IMPACT ON INNER-
GERMAN RELATIONS, THE SITUATION OF BERLIN, AND THE EX-
TERNAL SECURITY OF THE FRG. THE LAST POINT ALSO EN-
TAILS THE PRESENTATION OF A PLAN FOR THE FUTURE COURSE

OF INNER-GERMAN RELATIONS AND FRG CONTACTS IN EASTERN EUROPE, TO BE BASED ON THE MARCH 8 DELIBERATIONS.

6. THE MARCH 8 DEBATE ON GERMANY SERVED KOHL'S PURPOSES IN SEVERAL WAYS. IT OPENED THE PATH TO A RETHINKING, AND PERHAPS AN EVENTUAL CHANGE, IN BASIC CDU POSITIONS; IT GAVE HIM THE FLEXIBILITY HE NEEDS TO PURSUE HIS STRATEGY OF RAPPROCHEMENT WITH THE FDP; IT KEPT THE RANKS TOGETHER BY PASSING A RESOLUTION WHICH HOLDS SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE; AND IT CONSUMED TIME WHICH THE DELEGATES MIGHT OTHERWISE HAVE SPENT ON MORE DIVISIVE ISSUES. THE DEBATE THUS GAVE KOHL ONE MORE REASON TO VIEW THE DUSSELDORF MEETING AS A PERSONAL SUCCESS, DESPITE WIDESPREAD UNCERTAINTIES ABOUT HIS ULTIMATE PLANS AND STAYING POWER (REFTEL).

7. MANY DELEGATES AND OBSERVERS NOTED WITH REGRET THAT THIS CONVENTION, IN PARTICULAR THE DAY ON GERMAN POLICY, COVERED LITTLE NEW GROUND. SEVERAL YOUNG DELEGATES MADE THIS POINT FROM THE PODIUM, ARGUING THAT THE PARTY SHOULD RATHER SPEND ITS TIME ON ENERGY, UNEMPLOYMENT, AND PENSIONS REFORM. THIS POINT HAS VALIDITY ONLY IF ONE ACCEPTS THE PREMISE THAT A CDU NATIONAL CONVENTION CAN AFFORD TO TACKLE SUCH PROBLEMS IN THE OPEN. IN DUSSELDORF, MANY DELEGATES SEEMED TO FEAR THAT SUCH AN OPEN DISCUSSION WOULD PROVOKE PRECISELY THE PASSIONS AND DISAGREEMENTS WHICH KOHL WORKED SUCCESSFULLY TO AVOID. SINCE KREUTH, THE CDU HAS HAD AN OVERRIDING NEED TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SHOW UNITY IN THE RANKS. THE DRAB, UNINSPIRING DUSSELDORF CONVENTION WAS THE PRICE IT PAID FOR THIS SHOW OF UNITY.

8. THIS IS NOT TO SAY THAT THE MARCH 8 EXERCISE WAS A SHAM. FAR FROM IT. BY TAKING UP THE ISSUE OF HUMAN RIGHTS AS APPLIED IN THE GDR, THE CDU BELIEVES IT HAS FOUND A WAY TO STEAL A MAJOR POLITICAL MARCH ON THE SCHMIDT GOVERNMENT. THE PARTY HAS ALREADY FILED A GRAND PARLIAMENTARY QUERY ON GERMAN POLICY, WHICH WILL LEAD TO A FULL-DRESS DEBATE IN THE BUNDESTAG LATER THIS SPRING. IN THE LONGER-TERM, THE EMPHASIS ON HUMAN RIGHTS MAY ALSO GIVE THE CDU A BREATHING SPACE TO PROCEED WITH ITS PROGRAM MANDATE, WHILE MAINTAINING THE UNITY REAFFIRMED AT DUSSELDORF. THIS WILL REQUIRE THAT KOHL AND HIS COLLEAGUES CONTINUE TO LIVE WITH BASIC CONTRADICTIONS WITHIN THE CDU, AND SPECIFICALLY IN ITS POLICY ON GERMANY. HOWEVER, THEY HAVE NO PRACTICAL CHOICE. VON WEIZSAECKER, SPEAKING AFTER THE

CONVENTION, MADE THE POINT THAT THE MARCH 8 EXERCISE
WAS THE ONSET OF A LONG EDUCATION PROCESS WHICH CAN
ONLY GO FORWARD WITH DELIBERATE SPEED. IT IS TOO EARLY
TO SAY HOW FAR KOHL WILL LEAD HIS PARTY IN THAT
PROCESS. WHAT IS CLEAR IS THAT THE OUTCOME WILL TEST
BOTH HIS FUTURE AS THE CDU'S LEADER AND THE PROSPECTS
THAT THE UNION WILL EVENTUALLY RETURN TO POWER IN
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
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Copy: SINGLE
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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977BONN04541
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770087-0377
Format: TEL
From: BONN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770364/aaaacecy.tel
Line Count: 395
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
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Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 8
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 BONN 4297
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 09-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3122399
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CDU DEBATES ITS POLICY ON GERMANY
TAGS: PINT, PFOR, SHUM, GE, GC, CDU, (KOHL, HELMUT)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/998424b9-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009